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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, EUR/RPM, EUR/ERA

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [NATO](#) [TU](#) [KV](#)
SUBJECT: [TURKEY/NATO-EU: NO SIGNS OF LET UP IN TURKEY'S POSITION](#)

REF: A. NICOSIA 490
[1](#)B. E-MAIL READ-OUT OF JULY 22 NAC LUNCH
[1](#)C. ANKARA 1138

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: While acknowledging recent French efforts to improve NATO-EU ties as a gesture of goodwill, Turkish officials are unimpressed. They view the recent French non-paper proposing a NATO-EU high-level working group with suspicion, and believe it is designed to circumvent the NATO-EU "Agreed Framework." Turkey continues to maintain that the Agreed Framework must apply to KFOR support for EULEX in Kosovo and has given us no indication of any flexibility except for vague assurances that Turkey will not oppose "on the ground cooperation." Turkish officials, both at the MFA and TGS view the Agreed Framework as a key instrument in protecting their principled position in support of NATO's pre-eminence in transatlantic security and against Greek Cypriot efforts to benefit from NATO support. They have repeatedly told us that Turkey's priority in NATO-EU relations is to keep Cyprus "out of NATO business." Turkey views any arrangement that would create the possibility for Greek Cypriots to receive direct support from NATO as anathema, fearing such a development would lend legitimacy to Nicosia's claim to represent all of Cyprus. Nicosia's decision not to participate in the EULEX mission (ref a) will help alleviate GOT concerns about keeping Cyprus out of EULEX, but does not resolve concerns that any formal KFOR-EULEX cooperation would further undermine the essence of the Agreed Framework. We expect Turkey to continue to try to leverage the intense interest in getting KFOR-EULEX cooperation right to extract concessions from the EU, and believe a visit by A/S Fried or Ambassador Volker in the fall could be very helpful in obtaining Turkey's support on a workable way forward in Kosovo. End Summary.

French Active, but Pessimistic

[1](#)2. (C) Turkey acknowledges French efforts to improve NATO-EU cooperation, including by hosting a July 7 seminar on NATO-EU cooperation in Paris, and floating a non-paper proposing an informal "NATO-EU high-level group" as signs of goodwill. MFA NATO Desk Officer Barkan Kuloglu told us Turkey was represented at the Paris meeting by Turkish ambassador to NATO Tacan Ildem, MFA NATO Department Head Sule Oztunc, and Turkey's NATO Parliamentary Assembly Head Vahit Erdem. He characterized the French efforts as "useful, but insufficient," and said Turkey's official position in

response to the French non-paper was articulated by Ambassador Ildem during the July 22 lunch discussion at NATO (ref. b). Specifically, Turkey would not be interested in any further informal proposals that seek to supplant existing mechanisms or circumvent agreements already reached by the two organizations. According to Kuloglu, Ildem expressed interest in the October 2007 French non-paper, but said without movement on the earlier proposal, Turkey could not support the current French non-paper. Kuloglu said Turkey is willing to hear out the French proposal, but expects the EU to live up to the commitments it has made to Turkey and to NATO. He said the GOT noticed and appreciated points made by U.S. representatives at the July 7 seminar and at the "Friends of Kosovo" meeting in support of Turkey's EU desires.

¶3. (C) France dispatched former ambassador to NATO and current chief advisor to the National Audit Office Benoit D'Aboville on July 24 to brief the GOT on the French White Book on defense and security strategy. According to French Embassy Deputy Political Counselor Francois-Xavier Reymond (protect), D'Aboville met with Turkish National Security Council SecGen Ambassador Tahsin Burcuoglu, and their conversation focused on efforts to try to improve bilateral security and defense ties. They covered difficulties in NATO-EU cooperation but the discussions were "inconclusive." Plans for Burcuoglu to visit Paris early in the fall are in the works, but no dates have been set (Burcuoglu's visit to Paris is not public information). Reymond characterized French-Turkish bilateral military ties as "virtually non-existent", citing the bill passed by the French National Assembly in October 2006 which, if it had passed the Senate,

would have criminalized the denial of the Armenian Genocide, as the reason for frosty defense relations. As a result, Reymond was pessimistic about France being able to make meaningful progress in NATO-EU relations or bilateral French-Turkish defense cooperation during the term of the French EU presidency.

Turkey Standing Firm on NATO-EU

¶4. (C) Officials at the MFA and TGS continue to underscore to us in recent meetings (including ref c) that Turkey's position on NATO-EU cooperation in general and KFOR-EULEX in particular is centered on Turkey's principled position both in support of NATO's primacy in Euroatlantic security, and against Greek Cypriot efforts to interact with NATO. A two-star TGS officer responsible for NATO-EU issues put it bluntly: "We want to keep Cyprus out of NATO business." Turkey's hard-line stance against any Cypriot involvement in NATO-EU cooperation is in part linked to its view that allowing Cyprus to have any role in NATO-EU cooperation would be tantamount to giving tacit recognition to Nicosia's claim of being the sole, legal representative of the entire island of Cyprus. Turkey's position also reflects a visceral desire to "get back" at Cyprus for blocking Turkey's ambitions for closer links with ESDP, and for the difficulties Turkey has experienced in its EU accession process.

¶5. (C) The Turks have a broad interpretation of the Agreed Framework. In essence, Turkey believes the Agreed Framework applies to all aspect of NATO-EU cooperation because, in its view, all cooperation between NATO and the EU is strategic in nature. Turkish officials consider the Agreed Framework the key instrument in protecting Turkey's equities, and is deeply suspicious of what they see as EU efforts to chip away at the viability of the framework. In the case of EULEX's request for NATO's military support, the Turks reject claims that the Agreed Framework only applies to Berlin Plus operations in which the EU requests NATO's military support, and not to civilian ESDP operations. Turkey believes the Agreed Framework should apply in any ESDP operation requiring NATO's military support, whether civilian or military. While Nicosia's decision not to participate in the EULEX mission (ref a) will help assuage Turkey's concerns about keeping Cyprus out of KFOR-EULEX cooperation, it does not resolve

Turkey's fear that any formal KFOR-EULEX cooperation (agreed to by the NAC) would set a precedent that would further undermine the essence of the "Agreed Framework."

¶16. (C) While Turkey understands that the EU will not be able to reach consensus on offering Turkey closer links with ESDP, Turkish officials assert that this is a problem of the EU's own making. Both military and diplomatic interlocutors have said that the EU decided to allow Cyprus into its club, and now, it has to deal with the consequences. In Turkey's view, it is a simple choice between "choosing Turkey" or "choosing Cyprus."

¶17. (C) Comment: We expect Turkey will continue to try to leverage the intense European interest in successful KFOR-EULEX cooperation to extract long-sought concessions from the EU. The EU, however, appears unable to offer Turkey what it wants most. While we do not believe Turkey will be ready to concede on broader issues of principle with respect to NATO-EU cooperation, we may be able to persuade the GOT to relent on blocking approval of the NATO OPLAN for the Balkans as it too has a strong interest in ensuring Kosovo's success (not to mention the security of the police officers it has offered to EULEX). The GOT will want to point to some tangible victory as a face saving way for Turkey to back down from its maximalist position on KFOR-EULEX cooperation. We could consider, in exchange for Turkey's consent to allow the NATO OPLAN to move forward, offering assurances that the U.S. will support the application of the Agreed Framework in future instances when the EU requests NATO's military support for ESDP missions: this might assuage Turkish fears about continuing EU efforts to undercut the Agreed Framework. We believe it would be very helpful for A/S Fried or Ambassador Volker to visit Ankara in the fall to engage Turkey on finding a constructive way forward on this issue.

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WILSON